

# OCS Policy Committee Meeting

2002-2007 5-Year OCS Leasing Program  
UPDATE  
October 31, 2001

# *LEGAL MANDATE*

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- Section 18 of the OCS Lands Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and maintain a 5-year oil and gas leasing program
- Preparation of a program is governed by detailed substantive and procedural requirements prescribed by section 18
- The requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) also apply

# ***STEPS IN THE PREPARATION PROCESS***

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## ■ **Sections 18(c) and (d) require:**

- (1) Request for Information (followed by 45-day comment period)**
- (2) Draft Proposed Program (60-day comment period)**
- (3) Proposed Program and Draft EIS (90-day comment period)**
- (4) Proposed Final Program and Final EIS (60-day waiting period)**
- (5) Approval**

# *COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS*

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- Section 18(a)(2) requires that timing and location of leasing be based on consideration of the 26 OCS planning areas in terms of:
  - geographical, geological, and ecological characteristics
  - developmental benefits and environmental risks
  - regional and national energy needs
  - other uses of the sea and seabed
  - industry interest
  - laws, goals, and policies of affected States
  - environmental sensitivity and marine productivity
  - other relevant environmental and predictive information



# BALANCING DECISION

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- The comments of interested and affected parties--which in many cases provide valuable information for the comparative analysis--must also be considered
- Section 18(a)(3) requires the Secretary's decisions on the timing and location of leasing to strike a balance between the potential for discovery of oil and gas and the potential for environmental damage and adverse impact to the coastal zone

# ***PRESIDENTIAL LEASING WITHDRAWAL***

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- The 1998 withdrawal made under the authority of section 12 of the OCS Lands Act applies to all or portions of 10 planning areas
  - North Aleutian Basin
  - Washington-Oregon, Northern California, Central California, and Southern California
  - North Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Straits of Florida (the portion encompassed by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary)
  - Eastern Gulf of Mexico (except proposed Sale 181 area)

# *PRESIDENTIAL LEASING WITHDRAWAL*

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- The withdrawn areas generally are those that have been subject to long-running annual congressional moratoria
- The withdrawal covers the tenure of the next two 5-year programs (and beyond as it applies to marine sanctuaries)



# *EFFECT OF THE WITHDRAWAL ON 5-YEAR PROGRAM PREPARATION*

- The section 12 withdrawal may be viewed as “trumping” the *comparative analysis* requirements of section 18 as they relate to the withdrawn areas
- Therefore, we are not *required* to consider the withdrawn areas in preparing the next 5-year program



# *WHERE WE ARE IN THE PREPARATION OF A NEW PROGRAM FOR 2002-2007*

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- The MMS started the process in December 2000 with a request for comments and information
  - we received some 10,150 comments. All except about 100 were variations of an email form letter expressing opposition to the OCS oil and gas program
  - we considered the comments and prepared a comparative analysis focusing on the available (not withdrawn) Gulf of Mexico and Alaska areas
  - On July 23, '01 we issued a Draft Proposed Program considering leasing in 8 Planning Areas (5 off Alaska and 3 in the Gulf of Mexico). A 60-day comment period, closing on September 21, followed.

# Who we heard from, and what we heard . . .

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- 9000+ individual comments - nearly all email form letters opposing the program
- 23 comments from Federal, State, and Local Governments with a wide variety of views
- 18 comments from Special Interest Groups - mostly in opposition to the program, particularly in Alaska
- 9 Companies submitted comments concerning Gulf of Mexico Leasing

# Who we heard from, and what we heard . . . cont'd

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- 5 Companies submitted comments concerning Leasing in Alaska.
- 5 Oil & Gas Industry Associations submitted comments on various aspects of the Draft Proposed Program
- The Proposed program provides a summary of the comments received.  
All the comments can be found on our Website - [www.mms.gov](http://www.mms.gov)



# ***SUBSEQUENT STEPS***

- After considering all the DPP comments
- October 26, 2001--we issued the Proposed Program and Draft EIS
  - focuses on the same 8 planning areas in the DPP
  - 90-day comment period will end in January 2002
- April 2002--Issue Proposed Final Program and Final EIS
  - 60-day waiting period ending in June 2002
- June 2002--Secretarial Approval of the 5-Year Program for 2002-2007 (to take effect as of July 1, 2002)



# What's in the Proposed Program?

- 3 Beaufort Sea Sales - '03, '05, & '07

deleted 23 spring lead blocks inadvertently included in the DPP

- 2 Chukchi/Hope Basin Sales - '04 & '07

- 1 "special" Sale in Norton Basin - '03

- 2 Cook Inlet/Shelikof Sales - '04 & '06

- 5 Western & 5 Central Gulf of Mexico Sales

- 2 Eastern Gulf Sales in the same area as Sale 181 - '03 & '05

THANK YOU

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